

# Public Works Awarded National Honors for Innovative Programs

By Aleen Bedrosian

The LA County Public Works Department has once again earned national accolades for its outstanding and innovative programs and projects. During a ceremony last month, the National Association of Counties

recognized the Department with 4 of 26 prestigious **NACo Achievement Awards** presented to LA County this year. The awards program began in 1970 and honors excellence and achievement in a number of categories, such as information

technology, administration, and health. This year's award-winning Department honorees included programs involving risk management, contract tracking, graffiti education, and customer payment inquiries.



Photo: Christian L. Garcia

## Graffiti Educational Program Land Development Division

The Graffiti Educational program is an interactive presentation about graffiti vandalism, which costs Metrolink, Caltrans, and the County (88 cities included) \$35 million annually. The purpose of the program is to inform students of the consequences of getting caught and to empower them to keep their communities graffiti free.

The program manager and staff visit schools across the County to conduct assemblies, focusing mainly on children from 4th-6th grade. By targeting such a young demographic and emphasizing education, eradication, and enforcement, the program takes a preventative approach rather than a curative one, encouraging students to channel their creativity in productive ways.

## Doing Business with Public Works Information Technology Division

Public Works created the Business Opportunities Portal to enhance communications and improve the visibility of new opportunities. Through this one-stop destination, bidding materials, Public Works contact information, and other related County and State contracting information is available. The portal tracks the life cycle of each contract and allows businesses to stay updated through e-mail notifications, social media, and RSS feeds.

In 2012, Public Works posted more than 120 projects valued at over \$432 million through this portal. More than 2,500 businesses used the system to register profiles and subscribe to notifications. Overall, the site received more than 230,000 unique visitors.

## Customer Invoice Payment Status Inquiry Fiscal Division

Customer Invoice Payment Status Inquiry is a web-based application that provides customers the ability to view the status of their payments made to Public Works. Customers can also access the Public Works website to view most invoices dated on or after August 25, 2011.

The objectives of the application are to assist customers in managing their accounts, to automate the payment status inquiry process, to increase operational efficiency, and to reduce paper consumption by eliminating the need for duplicate copies of invoices.

## Risk Management Dashboard and Reporting System Survey Mapping and Property Management, Human Resources, and Information Technology Divisions

The Risk Management Dashboard and Reporting System is a tool used by Public Works to raise risk awareness, reduce costs, and promote a proactive approach to managing risk.

The Dashboard enables managers to analyze trends in general liability, workers' compensation, and auto liability claims and to drill down into causes, costs, and geographic concentration. It also allows them to develop, assign, and track the completion of corrective action plans to improve operations and avoid future claims and litigation.

Since its implementation in June 2010, the Dashboard has enhanced information sharing on risk exposure and encouraged the timely implementation of control measures to avoid or decrease risk.

## Public Works CIO Honored for Leadership Skills

By Aleen Bedrosian

The Los Angeles Business Journal recently named LA County Public Works' Chief Information Officer Jesse Juarros as its 2013 **Government CIO of the Year**.

The Journal acknowledged Juarros for his Information Technology governance structure, which enables IT and business unit leaders to work together to ensure that IT decisions are aligned with the Department's strategic objectives.

This structure allows him to maintain productive working relationships with unit leaders and keeps him close to the core of operations.

Juarros was also commended for his strong commitment to the Public Works team and organization. He has chaired the Department's 30-member Division Head committee, and currently leads the IT Governance committee.

This is the second time that Juarros has been recognized by the Business Journal. In 1999, while serving as CIO for the City of Los Angeles, he was named one of the "Top 20 Local People in the Broadband Revolution."

During his nine years with Public Works, he and his branch



Photo: Diandra Jay

have earned numerous awards from the National Association of Counties, the County of Los Angeles Quality and Productivity Commission, and the American Public Works Association for improving customer service to the public and streamlining internal business processes.

Juarros gives much of the credit for his prestigious awards to his team members.

"Without their experience, creativity, and dedication, we wouldn't be able to develop the projects that we do," Juarros said. "They are a very effective group and a pleasure to work with every day."

## Department Wins Transportation System Award

By Mike Kaspar

The Department continues to lead the way in the implementation of advanced traffic technologies that, according to the Intelligent Transportation Society of America, "create a safer, more efficient, and sustainable transportation system."

The Society recently recognized the Department with the **Best Innovative Practice Award** for the development, installation, and management of the Multi-jurisdictional Wireless Communication System. The system uses a wireless communication to monitor, manage, and synchronize traffic conditions at thousands of intersections Countywide. Since its implementation, traffic signal synchronization has been implemented on 102 County roadways, impacting more than 2,600 intersections. The net effect has meant that travel times on many of the designated streets have been cut by as much as 29 percent. These commuter time reductions translate into savings of \$218 million in vehicle costs, 14.8 million travel miles, and 18.7 million gallons of fuel, and reduced vehicle pollutants by more than 7.7 tons.

In addition to the cost savings and reduced environmental impact, the new system allows dozens of local and regional traffic agencies to communicate with each other.

The Society is the Nation's largest organization dedicated to advancing the research, development, and deployment of intelligent transportation systems.



Photo: Christian L. Garcia

Pictured from left, Keith Shimizu, Manny Medina, Jane White, Gilberto Bravo, Nelson Perez, George Ellis, Dean Lehman, Marty Amundson, Bob Scharf, Pat Smith and Pete Cruz.